

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A networked expert system for automatic evaluation and quality control of medical point of care laboratory measurement data of a patient specimen, comprising:
 - a point of care measuring device disposed at a point of care which obtains point of care laboratory measurement data;
 - a central expert system, disposed remote from said location of point of care, and a data link, selected from the group consisting of a data line and a data network, connecting said central expert system to said point of care measuring device;
 - said central expert system being accessible by a treating physician via said data link to function as a virtual laboratory data collection and diagnostic system for acting on said point of care laboratory measurement data to make an evaluation available to said treating physician based on said point of care laboratory measurement data; and
 - a central laboratory connected online to said expert system for automatically reporting back a listing to said treating physician of secondary examinations available for acting on said point of care laboratory measurement data to make an evaluation available to said treating physician based on said point of care laboratory measurement data if an initial evaluation at said expert system of said point of care laboratory measurement data does not produce a definitive diagnosis.
2. (Original) A networked expert system as claimed in claim 1 wherein said point of care measuring device is disposed at a facility of a physician.
3. (Cancelled)
4. (Previously Presented) A networked expert system as claimed in claim 1 wherein the central laboratory reports the results of the secondary examinations to the

expert system and the expert system re-evaluates the point of care laboratory measurement data by using the results of the secondary examinations.

5. (Previously Presented) A networked expert system as claimed in claim 1 wherein a request to the point of care is automatically made for providing a sample for the central laboratory.

6. (Original) A networked expert system as claimed in claim 1 further comprising a plurality of sub-systems forming said central expert system connected to each other via a data network using data encoding.

7. (Previously Presented) A networked expert system as claimed in claim 1 wherein said expert system includes a data bank containing up-to-date medical knowledge and patient data and acts on said point of care laboratory measurement data using said medical knowledge and said patient data.

8. (Original) A networked expert system as claimed in claim 6 wherein said central expert system includes means for limiting access to said up-to-date medical knowledge and patient data only to authorized persons.

9. (Original) A networked expert system as claimed in claim 7 further comprising, at said location of said treating physician, a chip card reader which requires insertion of a chip card of an authorized user in order to authorize access to said central expert system.

10. (Original) A networked expert system as claimed in claim 1 wherein said point of care measurement device comprises a container for obtaining a patient specimen having an electronically readable identifier thereon.

11. (Previously Presented) A networked expert system as claimed in claim 10 wherein said electronically readable identifier is a bar code.

12. (Currently Amended) A networked expert system for automatic evaluation and quality control of medical point of care laboratory measurement data of a patient specimen, comprising:

a communications interface for receiving a message including point of care laboratory measurement data derived from a patient specimen;

a central expert system including access to a data bank for examining the point of care laboratory measurement data and for assessing sufficiency of said patient specimen ~~point of care laboratory measurement data~~ for preparing a definite diagnosis and at least one secondary examination;

a data bank containing up-to-date medical knowledge and patient data;

an input processor for receiving data comprising a diagnostic evaluation of the point of care laboratory measurement data and therapy concepts and background knowledge; and

a distribution processor for forwarding the received diagnostic evaluation data and therapy concepts and background knowledge to a destination system.

13. (Previously Presented) A networked expert system as claimed in claim 12 wherein point of care laboratory measurement data is obtained from a point of care measuring device disposed at the destination system.

14. (Currently Amended) A networked expert system as claimed in claim 12 wherein said expert system is connected online to a central laboratory for automatically reporting back a listing to the destination system of said secondary examinations available for acting on said point of care laboratory measurement data upon ~~at least one~~ ~~of~~ a negative sufficiency assessment and if an initial evaluation at said central expert system of said point of care laboratory measurement data derived from said patient specimen does not produce a definitive diagnosis.

15. (Currently Amended) A networked expert system as claimed in claim 14 wherein the central laboratory reports the ~~results~~ listing of the secondary examinations ~~to the central expert system~~ a treating physician and subsequent to positive feedback

from said treating physician, the central expert system re-evaluates the point of care laboratory measurement data by using ~~the results~~ at least one listed ~~of the~~ secondary examinations.

16. (Withdrawn) A networked expert system for automatic evaluation and quality control of medical point of care laboratory measurement data, comprising:

an input processor for receiving, through a data link, data representing point of care laboratory measurements from a point of care measurement device;

a display generator for generating a user interface display image enabling a user to enter a request to receive a diagnostic evaluation of the point of care laboratory measurement data and therapy concepts and background knowledge; and

a communications interface for:

processing the received request for diagnostic evaluation and therapy concepts and background knowledge to provide a formatted request message for communication and initiating communication of a formatted request message to a central station,

receiving a message including data for a diagnosis and therapy concepts and background knowledge responsive to said communicated formatted request message from the central station, and

initiating communication of said responsive message to a user.

17. (Withdrawn) A networked expert system as claimed in claim 16 wherein the user is a physician.

18. (Withdrawn) A networked expert system as claimed in claim 18 wherein the central station is connected online to a central laboratory for automatically reporting back a listing to said treating physician of secondary examinations available for acting on said point of care laboratory measurement data if an initial evaluation at said expert system of said point of care laboratory measurement data does not produce a definitive diagnosis.

19. (Withdrawn) A networked expert system as claimed in claim 16 wherein said central station includes a data bank containing up-to-date medical knowledge and patient data and acts on said point of care laboratory measurement data using said medical knowledge and said patient data for producing the responsive message.

20. (New) A networked expert system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said secondary examinations include at least one of:

an alternative secondary examination wherein parameters used in secondary evaluation of said data are equal to said initial evaluation but are determined by a method different from said initial evaluation; and

a supplemental secondary examination wherein parameters used in said secondary examinations are different than parameters used in said initial evaluation and which are not to be determined by said point of care measuring device.